

Sunday Morning Bible Study Lesson

Sunday, July 5, 2020

“We are travelers on a journey, fellow pilgrims on the road; we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.” That song speaks to one’s walk of faith. We don’t journey alone! We have Christ to guide us and fellow “pilgrims” to lean on. The image of a yoke is a symbol of connection. Taking the yoke upon ourselves reminds us that we do not have to carry out our assignment as believers on our own. We are part of a team whose members work together, learn from each other, rejoice with others, cry with others, and encourage each other.

Read: 1 Peter 4:1-2,12-19; Matthew 11:28-30

The Christian life is often portrayed in a positive light, to the exclusion of any trials, difficulties, or sacrifices. But the reality is that living for Christ can be hard. As followers of Christ, we are to turn our backs on the former way of life and embrace a new way of living in Christ. Our hope in Christ not only carries us through such circumstances, but gives us cause to rejoice and glory in Christ. No matter how much suffering we face, God can use it to deepen our walk with Him.

When we face suffering with the mind of Christ, we see it through the “wide-angle” lens of God’s will and not the shortsighted lens of our discomfort, pain, or fear. Jesus viewed His life and suffering on earth through the eyes of eternity; He knew more was at stake than the momentary pain and suffering of His death on a cross.

“Rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ.” (v. 13) When we’ve identified with Him and share in His sufferings, we reveal His glory—and that’s definitely cause for celebration. A person should not glory or rejoice in the face of suffering that is a consequence of their disobedience or sinful lifestyle. Suffering for bad behavior is a cause for shame, but we have no shame when we suffer for following Christ. (see 2 Corinthians 6:4-10)

Jesus invites those who are weary to find rest in him. The rest he offers is not the complete absence of duty or responsibility. A yoke is still a yoke. The rest Jesus offers is solidarity and partnership. He does not promise absence of difficulty; he invites us into a mutual sharing of the load as we learn from him.

As you endure, let Him deepen your walk with Him. Let God mold you more and more into Christlikeness. It will lead you to glorify God, and as others see Christ at work in you, it can be a cause for them to also glorify God.

Questions for Reflection:

- ◇ How can we arm ourselves with the same attitude as Christ in the face of suffering?
- ◇ What hinders us from rejoicing when times are difficult?
- ◇ When has your faith grown after a period of suffering?

Prayer:

Gracious God, we ask that You deliver us from suffering. But if we must suffer, may we do so by aligning our lives with the teachings of Jesus and following His example. Amen.